

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently Amended) The system as set forth in claim [[1]]
10, wherein ~~the~~ cantilevering of the subject pallet is constant in all longitudinal
positions of the subject and intermediate pallets to prevent deflection changes while
extending into ~~any of the imaging modalities~~ the first and second scanner subject
receiving bores.

3. (Currently Amended) The system as set forth in claim [[1]]
5, further including an wherein the intermediate support ~~means is~~ disposed between
the first and second modalities for supporting the tip of the intermediate pallet in the
extended position such that the intermediate pallet is supported against deflecting as
5 the subject pallet moves along the intermediate pallet into the second modality.

4. (Currently Amended) The system as set forth in claim [[1]]
10, wherein the base includes a main support pallet including a static support member
which supports the tip of the intermediate pallet while the subject pallet extends into
the first ~~modality~~ scanner subject receiving bore during imaging.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~The A telescopic table system as set~~
~~forth in claim 4, wherein the intermediate support further includes for imaging a~~
subject in at least a first modality and a second modality, the table comprising:
a base;
5 an intermediate pallet having a tip and a trailing edge mounted to the
base for longitudinal movement between at least a retracted position and an extended
position with the tip extending outward from the base;
a subject pallet having a leading edge and a trailing edge; and
bearing supports mounted adjacent the subject pallet trailing edge such
10 that the subject pallet is cantilevered therefrom, the bearing supports being mounted
to the intermediate pallet for longitudinal movement therealong;

a catcher support member which is disposed on a top surface of the an
intermediate support[.]; and

- 15 a lift mechanism which raises the intermediate support until the catcher
support member comes into contact with an intermediate pallet lower surface to
support the intermediate pallet tip.

6. (Previously Presented) The system as set forth in claim 5,
wherein a leading edge of the intermediate pallet is cantilevered a common distance
past the catcher support member when the subject pallet extends into the second
modality as past the static support member when the subject pallet extends into the
5 first modality.

7. (Currently Amended) The A telescopic table system as set
forth in claim 1, further including for imaging a subject in at least a first modality and
a second modality, the table comprising:

- 5 a base;
an intermediate pallet having a tip and a trailing edge mounted to the
base for longitudinal movement between at least a retracted position and an extended
position with the tip extending outward from the base;

a subject pallet having a leading edge and a trailing edge;
bearing supports mounted adjacent the subject pallet trailing edge such
10 that the subject pallet is cantilevered therefrom, the bearing supports being mounted
to the intermediate pallet for longitudinal movement therealong; and

a locking mechanism which locks the intermediate pallet against
moving until the subject pallet is retracted to a substantially fully retracted position
with respect to the intermediate pallet.

8. (Previously Presented) The system as set forth in claim 7,
further including:

- 5 an unlocking mechanism which locks the subject pallet into the
retracted position and releases the locking mechanism, permitting the intermediate
pallet to move, and

a drive mechanism which drives the intermediate pallet between its fully retracted position and its extended position.

9. (Currently Amended) The table as set forth in claim [[1]]
10, wherein the subject pallet is manufactured from a stiffened carbon fiber to limit deflection of the subject pallet.

10. (Currently Amended) A diagnostic imaging system comprising:

a first diagnostic scanner of the a first modality, the first diagnostic scanner having a subject receiving bore;

5 a second diagnostic scanner of the a second modality, having a subject receiving bore, the second diagnostic scanner being disposed adjacent the first diagnostic scanner with the second ~~modality scanner~~ subject receiving bore being aligned with the first ~~modality scanner~~ subject receiving bore;

10 an intermediate support disposed between the first and second diagnostic scanners; and;

a telescoping table system as set forth in claim 1, including:

a base disposed adjacent the first diagnostic scanner,

15 an intermediate pallet having a tip and a trailing edge mounted to the base for longitudinal movement between at least a retracted position and an extended position with the tip extending outward from the base, through the first scanner subject receiving bore to engage the intermediate support adjacent the tip,

20 a subject pallet having a leading edge and trailing edge mounted to the intermediate pallet for movement therealong between a retracted position and a cantilevered position, and

a drive mechanism for (a) moving the subject pallet through the first ~~modality scanner~~ subject receiving bore and (b) extending the intermediate pallet through the first ~~modality scanner~~ subject receiving bore to the intermediate support and moving the

- 25 subject pallet along the intermediate pallet through the second
 ~~modality scanner~~ subject receiving bore.

11-14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) ~~The A method as set forth in claim 14,~~
~~further including of subject handling using a telescopic table system in which an~~
~~intermediate pallet is movably mounted to a base for longitudinal movement~~
~~therealong between at least a retracted position and an extended position; and a~~
5 ~~subject pallet having a leading edge and a trailing edge is movably mounted on the~~
~~intermediate pallet for longitudinal movement therealong, the method comprising:~~
 ~~loading a subject on the subject pallet while the subject pallet is being~~
~~supported by the intermediate pallet in the retracted position, and while the~~
~~intermediate pallet is supported by a static main support member;~~
10 ~~while continuing to support the intermediate pallet on the main support~~
~~member, moving the subject support pallet along the intermediate pallet into a first~~
~~modality scanner for imaging;~~
 ~~withdrawing the subject support pallet from the first modality scanner~~
~~to align with the intermediate pallet;~~
15 ~~extending the aligned intermediate and subject pallets simultaneously~~
~~through the first modality scanner to the an intermediate support, which includes a~~
~~catcher support member disposed on a top surface of the intermediate support;~~
 ~~raising a lift mechanism of the intermediate support until the catcher~~
~~support member comes into contact with an intermediate pallet lower surface to~~
20 ~~support the intermediate pallet; and~~
 ~~while supporting the intermediate pallet with the catcher support~~
~~member, moving the subject pallet along the intermediate pallet through the a second~~
~~modality scanner subject-receiving bore for imaging.~~

16. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 15,
wherein a leading edge of the intermediate pallet is cantilevered a common distance
past the catcher support member when the subject pallet extends into the second

modality scanner as past the static support member when the subject pallet extends
5 into the first modality scanner.

17. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 15,
further including:

retracting the subject pallet, which is loaded with the subject, from the
second modality scanner into the retracted position in an emergency, including the
5 steps of:

- (a) locking the intermediate pallet against moving;
- (b) retracting the subject pallet through from the second modality
scanner;
- (c) locking the subject pallet into a retracted position ~~such that in~~
10 which the subject and intermediate pallets are substantially aligned;
- (d) unlocking the intermediate pallet; and
- (e) moving the locked and aligned subject and intermediate pallets
through the first modality scanner into the retracted position.

18. (Currently Amended) A medical imaging system
comprising:

- a first imaging system;
- a second imaging system;
- 5 a catcher disposed between the first and second imaging systems; and
- a common patient support table, wherein the patient support table is
movable between a first position where an object to be imaged is within an imaging
region of the first imaging system and a second position where the table is supported
on the catcher and the object is positioned within an imaging region of the second
10 imaging system;

wherein said common patient support table is cantilevered in both the
first position and the second position such that an axial deflection of the patient
support table in the first position is the same as an axial deflection of the patient
support table in the second position.

19. (Previously Presented) The medical system of claim 18, wherein the patient support table includes a main support pallet, an intermediate support pallet and a patient support pallet.

20. (Currently Amended) The medical system of claim 19, wherein the intermediate support pallet and the patient support pallet extend from the main support pallet when the patient support table is in the first position, and wherein the patient support pallet extends from the intermediate support pallet and the intermediate support pallet is supported on the catcher when the patient support table is in the second position.

21. (Previously Presented) The medical system of claim 20, wherein one or more support members are positioned between the patient support pallet and the intermediate pallet such that when the patient support pallet extends from the intermediate pallet, the patient support pallet is cantilevered on the intermediate pallet.

22. (New) The system as set forth in claim 10, further including:
a lift mechanism that lifts the intermediate support into contact with a lower surface of the intermediate pallet to support the intermediate pallet adjacent the tip when the subject pallet is extended into the subject receiving bore of the second scanner.

23. (New) The medical system of claim 18 further including:
a lift mechanism that raises and lowers the catcher.

24. (New) The medical system of claim 18, wherein said common patient support table is cantilevered in both the first position and the second position such that an axial deflection of the patient support table in the first position is the same as an axial deflection of the patient support table in the second position.